

Alberta auditor general investigating health care procurements after report alleges political interference

Story by Matthew Black, • 4d



On Thursday, Feb. 6, 2025, Alberta auditor general Doug Wylie announced he had launched an investigation into procurement at Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services, noting it pertained to chartered surgical facilities, medication and COVID-19 personal protection equipment. © Provided by Edmonton Journal

Alberta's auditor general is investigating procurement practices in the province's health ministry after the Globe and Mail reported the government had interfered in those processes, something that if proven true should prompt Premier Danielle Smith to resign, says the NDP Opposition.

Smith must step aside: Nenshi

On Thursday, Wylie announced he had launched an investigation into procurement at Alberta Health and AHS, noting it pertained to chartered surgical facilities, medication, and COVID-19 personal protection equipment, some of which had also been supplied by MHCare.

Speaking with reporters Thursday, Alberta NDP Leader Naheed Nenshi called on the premier to address the allegations immediately.

“The examination is looking at the effectiveness of management and control processes — including governance and oversight — ensuring value for Albertans while addressing concerns or allegations related to contracting and potential conflicts of interest,” he said in a statement.

Nenshi, who claimed to have seen parts of the letter, called for two further investigations — one by the Mounties, the other by the province’s ethics commissioner — as well as a judicial-led public inquiry.

“The interpretation that her termination was due to AHS’ review of certain procurement decisions are false,” the statement says.

“We understand that AHS has been reviewing these procurement decisions and processes and that work will continue until it is completed.”

It goes on to say it welcomes Wylie’s investigation and declined further comment until it is completed.

In a statement, AHS said it was reviewing its procurement processes and had paused the awarding of any contracts involving the parties that are involved in that review.

It declined further comment until Wylie’s review has been completed.

A lawyer representing MHCare also cited the auditor general’s investigation as well as potential future legal proceedings in declining to respond to the report’s allegations.

“Based on what our client has learned, the claims and insinuations made against them are based on a flawed perspective, is without merit, and contrary to substantiated evidence,” it reads, and declining further comment.

“We are confident that, as the process unfolds, the full facts will come to light and demonstrate that our client has acted properly at all times.”

‘Needless upheaval’

Mike Parker, the president of the Health Sciences Association of Alberta — which represents more than 30,000 health-care professionals — said in a statement the details in the report amount to “a scandal.”

“This whole approach is being driven to increase political influence over how health care is delivered and increase for-profit care.”

In separate statements, the Alberta Medical Association called for greater investment in public health care and the United Nurses of Alberta cited the “needless upheaval” in the system.

Nenshi said the report's allegations should lead the province to pause its ongoing health care restructuring, saying it had lost credibility.

"When hand-picked CEOs and hand-picked boards by Danielle Smith are fired, allegedly because they won't do her bidding, that means we don't have any faith in any of the restructuring."

mblack@postmedia.com